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TAGS: PREL PGOV AR
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: NO TIME WASTED IN NAMING NEW VICE
FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: BUENOS AIRES 320

¶1. (SBU) The Foreign Ministry, according to stories just coming out in the local press, has moved quickly to replace outgoing Vice FM Roberto Garcia-Moritan, who offered his resignation on March 11 (reftel). On March 13, Foreign Minister Taiana reportedly offered the VFM position to current Argentine Ambassador to Italy, Victorio Taccetti. Early press reports had indicated that Garcia-Moritan would replace Taccetti in Rome, but that is unconfirmed. Embassy spoke with Italian Political Counselor here in Buenos Aires, who said his Ambassador had spoken to Taccetti and that Taccetti had confirmed he had accepted the position.

¶2. (SBU) Per reftel, Garcia-Moritan, 60, claims he resigned the VFM position to attend to "personal matters" after almost 40 years in the Argentina's foreign service. The local press portrayed his departure as the consequence of a long string of missteps by the MFA. Garcia-Moritan is not directly implicated in any of the missteps, but it is conjectured that he is a convenient fall-guy.

¶3. (SBU) Bio information in the local press notes that Victorio Taccetti, 65, is a lawyer and career diplomat and a long-time Peronist who worked as an advisor on Nestor Kirchner's 2003 presidential campaign. He has held the rank of Ambassador since 1992, and has served in Argentine diplomatic and consular missions in Houston, New York, Washington and Mexico, where he was Ambassador from 1994-1999. He has also served as Subsecretary for Latin America and Subsecretary for International Coordination and Cooperation. Taccetti has studied in Florence, Italy, and has a Master's in Political Science from the University of Houston. A journalist told emboff that Taccetti is known among career diplomats to be "pro-Brazilian" rather than "nationalist" in foreign policy orientation.

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